

Idaho Roadless Rule Briefing Paper

Project Name: Green Horse

Forest/District: Nez Perce-Clearwater NF/Moose Creek RD

Date: September 1, 2020

Roadless Areas: O-Hara-Falls Creek and West Meadow Creek

Management Theme: Backcountry/Restoration

Project Status: Preparing EA/Draft DN for objections

Dates Presented to Commission: N/A

Key Contact: Sara Daugherty, Natural Resource Planner, 208-926-6404

Project Area: Project area is approximately 9,500 acres. Species distribution across the project area includes grand fir, spruce, Douglas-fir, lodgepole and cedar. Over 70% of the project area is dominated by grand fir or a grand fir/spruce mix. Past harvest has occurred since the 1970s on 18% of the project area. Numerous locations of known tree mortality from insect defoliators have been identified. Both aerial mapping and on-the-ground data confirmed tree mortality. This mortality is expected to increase over the next 2-3 years. Defoliation varied from 10%-80%. Stands in the larger size classes showed signs of root disease as well.

Purpose and Need: Based on observed existing conditions, as well as other supporting information (e.g. annual insect and disease aerial detection surveys, national insect and disease risk maps, input from local community members, Forest Plan management direction), there is a need to improve forest health, change species composition and stand structure to create a more resilient and resistant stand (i.e. a healthier, more resilient stand that is less susceptible to disease), reduce hazardous fuels and wildfire risk to timber resources, reduce hazardous fuel loads along roads for public safety and firefighter ingress/egress to protect timber resources and recreational opportunities within the project area and provide a sustained yield of resource outputs as directed in the Forest Plan.

Proposed Action: Roadside hazard tree removal of approximately 178 acres (along about 9.4 miles of system roads) within Idaho Roadless areas (70 acres in West Meadow Creek IRA along the 2116; 108 acres in O'Hara-Falls Creek IRA along the 464, 464-A, 356, 2103). Most of the road segments are located outside of the roadless areas; small portions of the 2116, 464-A, and 2103 roads are within the IRAs. Roadside units would treat trees that are dead/dying and pose a hazard to the road by an intermediate harvest treatment; up to 150 feet off the road (approximately one tree length) to provide for public and firefighter safety along system roads.

Road	Roadside Miles Treated	Existing Road Status & Maintenance Level (ML)
2116	3.7	Closed (ML-1)
464-A	0.8	Open (ML-2)
464	1	Open (ML-3)
356	1.6	Open (ML-3)
	1.5	Closed (ML-1)

Road	Roadside Miles Treated	Existing Road Status & Maintenance Level (ML)
2103	0.8	Closed (ML-1)
Totals	9.4 miles	Open: 3.4 miles Closed: 6 miles

Prescribed burning of 268 acres is proposed within the O'Hara-Falls Creek IRA to maintain natural openings, reduce surface fuels, litter depth, and ladder fuels; increase canopy base height (the distance from the ground to the bottom of the tree canopy), and provide a fuel break in strategic locations along Forest Roads 356 and 9716 for wildfire management in the future and public and firefighter safety.

Total project activities include: approximately 1,520 of regeneration harvest, 178 acre of roadside intermediate harvest, 570 acres of prescribed burning, 2.3 miles of temporary road construction, 26 miles of road reconditioning, and 19 miles of road reconstruction.

Fuels Treatment Projects and CWPP: N/A

Rule References: Where incidental to the implementation of a management activity not otherwise prohibited by this subpart (36 CFR Part 294.2(c)(1)(vii))

Scoping comments/objections: N/A

Timeline:

EA/FONSI/DRAFT DN (draft) – September/October 2020

Objection Legal Notice – October 2020

Final Decision Notice – February 2021

Summary

- Road Construction/Reconstruction:** Yes, where small segments of the 2116 and 2103 roads occur intermittently within the 2 roadless boundaries, totaling 1.2 miles between the 2 roads.
- Timber Cutting, Sale, or Removal:** Yes, approximately 180 acres of roadside hazard tree removal (commercial harvest along 9.4 miles of system roads) in predominantly grand fir and grand fir/mix affected by insect and disease that pose a hazard to the road. Harvest methods include tractor and skyline.
- Discretionary Minerals:** No
- Modification or Correction:** No

Responsible Official: Ron Tipton, Moose Creek District Ranger